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09/666,859	09/21/2000	Masahiko Murakami	1405.1026/JDH	5944

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EXAMINER

LEE, PHILIP C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2154

DATE MAILED: 12/14/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/666,859	Applicant(s) MURAKAMI ET AL.	
	Examiner Philip C Lee	Art Unit 2154	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 November 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

1. This action is responsive to the amendment and remarks filed on November 12, 2004.
2. Claims 1, 2 and 4-13 are presented for examination and claim 3 is cancelled.
3. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. code not included in this office action can be found in a prior office action.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-2, 4 and 12-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen, U.S. Patent 6,393,460 (hereinafter Gruen) in view of Sciammarella et al, U.S. Patent 5,982,369 (hereinafter Sciammarella).
6. Gruen and Sciammarella were cited in the last office action.

7. As per claim 1, Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed in a chat system structured to include chat devices connected to a network and which share virtual chat spaces configured on said network and which can send and receive messages among themselves (col. 1, lines 15-30), comprising:

associating and preparing specific keywords with specific keyword categories (col. 7, lines 1-7);

specifying said keyword categories wherein at least one of said keywords are included in messages sent or received in a virtual space (col. 7, lines 14-19);

associating and storing said keywords and said keyword categories with virtual space identifiers of said virtual spaces in which messages are sent or received (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 7, lines 47-50);

calculating virtual space characteristics of said virtual spaces based on said keyword categories associated with the virtual spaces, the virtual space characteristics including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of the keyword categories (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16; col. 7, lines 26-30, 40-44); and

reporting said virtual space characteristics to users by displaying at least one of a keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points (52, fig. 1; col. 3, lines 16-20; col. 6, lines 50-57; col. 7, lines 47-51),

wherein a chat volume is recorded during a period of time after a message including at least one of the keywords (e.g. utterance) is sent in the virtual space (col. 4, lines 11-30; col. 5, lines 18-23);

wherein the recorded chat volume is proportional to an amount of interest (e.g. frequency of a given token in a utterance, wherein the given tokens containing individual words) (col. 5, lines 21-29) of at least one user participating in the virtual space in response to the message including the at least one of the keywords (col. 5, lines 43-47); and wherein the virtual space characteristics are calculated based on at least the recorded chat volume (col. 2, lines 26-52; col. 6, lines 50-67).

8. Gruen did not teach displaying a list of relevance point tabulation associated with keyword categories. Sciammarella taught displaying at least one of a keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of relevance point tabulations associated with a plurality of the keyword categories (col. 1, lines 31-43).

9. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Sciammarella because Sciammarella's method of displaying a list of relevance points tabulations associated with keyword categories would increase the user alertness of Gruen's system by allowing users to easily analyze relevancy associated with each of the multiple categories.

10. As per claims 2 and 12-13, Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed in a chat system structured to include chat devices connected to a network and which share virtual chat spaces configured on said network and which can send and receive messages among themselves (col. 1, lines 15-30), comprising:

a category table for associating and storing specific keywords with specific keyword categories (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 6, lines 50-67; col. 7, lines 1-7);

a virtual space table for associating and storing virtual space identifiers, said keywords sent into said virtual spaces, and said keyword categories (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 7, lines 47-50);

a control means for reading said keyword categories from said category table and for writing to the virtual space table said virtual space identifiers of said virtual spaces into which at least one of said keywords were sent, said keywords, and said keyword categories wherein a message sent into virtual space is acquired from said chat system and said message includes at least one of said keywords (col. 6, lines 33-67; col. 7, lines 45-65);

a decision means for calculating virtual space characteristics of said virtual space based on said keyword categories associated with the virtual spaces, the virtual space characteristics including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of the keyword categories (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16; col. 7, lines 26-30, 40-44); and an output means for outputting said characteristics of said virtual spaces by displaying at least one of a keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of relevance point tabulations associated with a plurality of the keyword categories (52, fig. 1; col. 3, lines 16-20; col. 6, lines 50-57; col. 7, lines 47-51),

wherein a chat volume is recorded during a period of time after a message including at least one of the keywords (e.g. utterance) is sent in the virtual space (col. 4, lines 11-30; col. 5, lines 18-23);

wherein the recorded chat volume is proportional to an amount of interest (e.g. frequency of a given token in a utterance, wherein the given tokens containing individual words) (col. 5, lines 21-29) of at least one user participating in the virtual space in response to the message including the at least one of the keywords (col. 5, lines 43-47); and wherein the virtual space characteristics are calculated based on at least the recorded chat volume (col. 2, lines 26-52; col. 6, lines 50-67).

11. Gruen did not teach displaying a list of relevance point tabulation associated with keyword categories. Sciammarella taught displaying at least one of a keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of relevance point tabulations associated with a plurality of the keyword categories (col. 1, lines 31-43).

12. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Sciammarella because Sciammarella's method of displaying a list of relevance points tabulations associated with keyword categories would increase the user alertness of Gruen's system by allowing users to easily analyze relevancy associated with each of the multiple categories.

13. As per claim 4, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen further taught wherein

said communication support system is additionally provided with a message volume storage means for storing message volume determined from a volume of messages sent from chat devices for each virtual space (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16); and said decision means calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword categories sent by chat devices in accordance with said message volume of chat devices in said virtual spaces (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16).

14. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen and Sciammarella in view of Trovato et al, U.S. Patent 6,425,012 (hereinafter Trovato).

15. Trovato was cited in the last office action.

16. As per claim 5, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen and Sciammarella did not teach the communication support system is additionally provided with a channel entry time storage means. Trovato taught wherein said communication support system is additionally provided with a channel entry time storage means for storing said entry time a chat device entered a virtual space for each virtual space (col. 3, lines 11-38; col. 4, lines 13-17); and

said decision means calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword categories sent by chat devices in accordance with said entry times said chat devices remain in said virtual spaces (col. 3, lines 11-38; col. 4, lines 13-17).

17. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella and Trovato because Trovato's system of including channel entry time would increase the likelihood of determining the characteristic of said virtual space in Gruen's and Sciammarella's systems by using the entry time as a parameter to determine the specific topic of said virtual space (col. 2, lines 1-7, 19-22).

18. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen and Sciammarella in view of Brown et al, U.S. Patent 5,941,947 (hereinafter Brown).

19. Brown was cited in the last office action.

20. As per claim 6, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen and Sciammarella did not teach acquiring the specific right of the chat device. Brown taught wherein said decision means acquires specific rights that a chat device has in regard to a virtual space from the chat system (col. 2, lines 32-36; col. 3, lines 26-30; col. 2, lines 66-col. 3, lines 11).

21. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella and Brown because Brown's system of acquiring the rights of a chat device in regard to a virtual space would increase the flexibility of Gruen's and Sciammarella's systems by controlling the rights of chat device in order to achieve a variety of objectives (col. 4, lines 66-col. 5, lines 2).

22. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen and Sciammarella in view of Bradshaw et al, U.S. Patent 6,065,056 (hereinafter Bradshaw).

23. Bradshaw was cited in the last office action.

24. As per claim 7, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen and Sciammarella did not teach said decision means of comparing said virtual spaces characteristics and a keyword category. Bradshaw taught wherein said decision means compares said virtual spaces characteristics and a keyword category and decides whether or not to report a message to other chat devices wherein said message including a keyword is sent from a chat device into a virtual space (col. 3, lines 66-col. 4, lines 4; col. 4, lines 28-32; col. 6, lines 7-9; col. 11, lines 34-36); and

said chat system sends the message in accordance with said decision (col. 3, lines 66-col. 4, lines 4; col. 4, lines 28-32; col. 6, lines 7-9; col. 11, lines 34-36).

25. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella and Bradshaw because Bradshaw's means of reporting a message by comparing the virtual space characteristics and a keyword category would enhanced Gruen's and Sciammarella's systems by providing notification over the content of the virtual space by the keyword category in a textual application (col. 2, lines 47-49).

26. Claims 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen, Sciammarella and Bradshaw in view of Cottrille et al, U.S. Patent 6,076,100 (hereinafter Cottrille).

27. Cottrille was cited in the last office action.

28. As per claims 8 and 10, Gruen, Sciammarella and Bradshaw taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 7 above. Gruen, Sciammarella and Bradshaw did not teach means to expel a chat device. Cottrille taught wherein decision means instructs the chat system to expel a chat device that sent an unsuitable message from a virtual space upon deciding that said message will not be reported to other chat devices (col. 5, lines 37-47; col. 7, lines 27-40); and

said chat system expels said chat device that sent said message from said virtual space in accordance with said instruction (col. 5, lines 37-47; col. 7, lines 27-40).

29. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella, Bradshaw and Cottrille because Cottrille's system of expelling the chat device would improved the security in Gruen's, Sciammarella's and Bradshaw's systems by monitoring the topic of the conversation and by providing the ability to apply penalties to improper user of chat device (col.1, lines 14-25).

30. As per claim 9, Cottrille further taught wherein said decision means additionally has a blacklist that records chat devices that sent unsuitable messages wherein said decision means decided that said messages would not be reported to other chat devices (col. 7, lines 11-26),
said decision means decides that said messages will not be reported to other chat devices wherein the sending sources of said message acquired from the chat system are included on said blacklist (col. 7, lines 11-26).

31. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen and Sciammarella in view of Ito et al, U.S. Patent 6,564,244 (hereinafter Ito).

32. Ito was cited in the last office action.

33. As per claim 11, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen and Sciammarella did not teach deleting said keyword and said keyword categories from said virtual space table. Ito taught wherein said control means additionally acquires a message time of a message that includes at least one of said keyword from said chat system, and additionally writes said message time to said virtual space table, and deletes said keywords and keyword categories from said virtual space table wherein a specified time has elapsed since said message time (col. 10, lines 61-65).

34. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella and Ito because Ito's

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system of deleting said keywords and keyword categories from said virtual space table would increase the efficiency in Gruen's and Sciammarella's systems by providing a reduction of resources by configuring the communication support system so that the state of the channel is recorded for a fix period of time (col. 2, lines 47-52, 59-60).

35. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 2 and 4-13, filed 11/12/04, have been fully considered but are not deemed to be persuasive and are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection.

36. Applicant's arguments fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.111(b) because they amount to a general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references. Applicant did not point out how recording the frequency of occurrence of a keyword is different from a chat volume is recorded during a period of time after a message including at least one of the keywords is sent in the virtual space; wherein the recorded chat volume is proportional to an amount of interest of at least one user participating in the virtual space in response to the message including the at least one of the keywords. Examiner interpreted the frequency of keyword as an amount of interest of at least one user participating in the virtual space in response to the message including the at least one of the keywords.


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37. Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed wherein a chat volume is recorded during a period of time after a message including at least one of the keywords (e.g. utterance) is sent in the virtual space (col. 4, lines 11-30; col. 5, lines 18-23);

wherein the recorded chat volume is proportional to an amount of interest (e.g. frequency of a given token in a utterance, wherein the given tokens containing individual words) (col. 5, lines 21-29) of at least one user participating in the virtual space in response to the message including the at least one of the keywords (col. 5, lines 43-47).

38. A shortened statutory period for reply to this Office action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Philip C Lee whose telephone number is (571)272-3967. The examiner can normally be reached on 8 AM TO 5:30 PM Monday to Thursday and every other Friday. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Follansbee can be reached on (571)272-3964. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703)872-9306. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)350-6121.

P.L.


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